

Hallmarks 2007



THE HARPETH HALL SCHOOL



Still Warm from the Day



Literature, Art, and Song

from the Upper School student body of

The Harpeth Hall School

3801 Hobbs Road • Nashville, TN 37215

www.harpethhall.org

*Cover image by Jane Marie Brown
"Still Warm from the Day" title by Grace Wright*

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On Poetry

Becca Hill

*As soon as Fred gets out of bed
His underwear goes on his head
His mother laughs, "Don't put it there,
A head's no place for underwear!"
But near his ears, above his brains
Is where Fred's underwear remains.*

*At night when Fred goes back to bed
He deftly plucks it off his head
His mother switches off the light
And softly croons, "Goodnight, goodnight"
And then, for reasons no one knows,
Fred's underwear goes on his toes.*

That was the first poem I ever memorized. You'd be hard-pressed to find an ounce of symbolic imagery in those twelve lines of AA BB CC nonsense, but they tell this imaginary (or maybe real) story without being obvious. The poet fits it into iambic pentameter and rhyme that you could jump rope to.

My admiration for poetry was probably founded on my dad's romanticism. Night-time poetry readings were not an anomaly in the Hill household, especially when I became old enough to progress from Shel Silverstein to Robert Frost and Emily Dickinson. I'm not sure why my dad thought I would understand e.e. cummings when I was eleven years old, but after hearing excerpts from the decrepit anthology my dad has had for years, strange phrases wouldn't stop swimming around in my mind. Phrases like "*evil is so worse than worst you fall in hate with love*" and "*the voice of your eyes is deeper than all roses*" and "*love's the I guess most only verb that lives*" and "*your life is only like one star after rain.*" Prose contains no such cliffhangers.

Poetry looks at things through painted magnifying glasses, making everything bigger and more extraordinary than reality permits.

It lends alternative definitions to innate assumptions. What is fog? Robert Frost and T.S. Eliot tell us it's a cat, slithering unnoticed between the buildings of London or walking carefully with her padded paws along the docks by night. What is death? cummings says it's no parenthesis. Our blood is an ocean, trees are gossiping women, the evening sky is a gassed patient, and the moon is "*a fragment of angry candy.*"

I am not sure exactly what it is about the inversion of syntax and imagery and personification that makes people hear statements in a different way than they would otherwise, but there are a lot of things I wouldn't appreciate or even recognize if it wasn't for poetry. Looking at the Christian bible, there are parts that are more prosaic than others, but the phrase "*love thy neighbor as thyself*" never really struck a chord with me as much as this Emily Dickinson poem:



Mary Fowler Howell

*I had no time to hate
because the grave would hinder me.
and life was not so ample
I could finish enmity.*

*Nor had I time to love
But since some industry must be
The little toil of love, I thought,
was large enough for me.*

Not only does poetry change my emotions startlingly easily, but it also tends to make me feel supported. It is rare to have a mood that a poem can't understand. Out of the centuries of poets of different background, religion, time period, and sexual orientation, the mathematical odds are almost impossible that there could be no one else who has felt chagrin at the loss of a loved one or the ignorance of a friend or the stupidity of an authority figure. Poetry convinces us that our angst is not only natural—it is beautiful.

There is something consoling and exciting about Emily Dickinson saying to me, *"I'm nobody! Who are you? Are you nobody, too? Then there's a pair of us — don't tell!"* or in Mary Oliver asking, *"And did you feel it, in your heart, how it pertained to everything? And have you too finally figured out what beauty is for? And have you changed your life?"* An afternoon of curling up with the poetry of these women who seem so selfless, and it's hard not to feel included and understood. I'm almost mad at myself (but not at all surprised) for not being able to describe the beginnings of relationships half as well as e.e. cummings when he says, *"Once like a spark, when strangers meet life begins."*

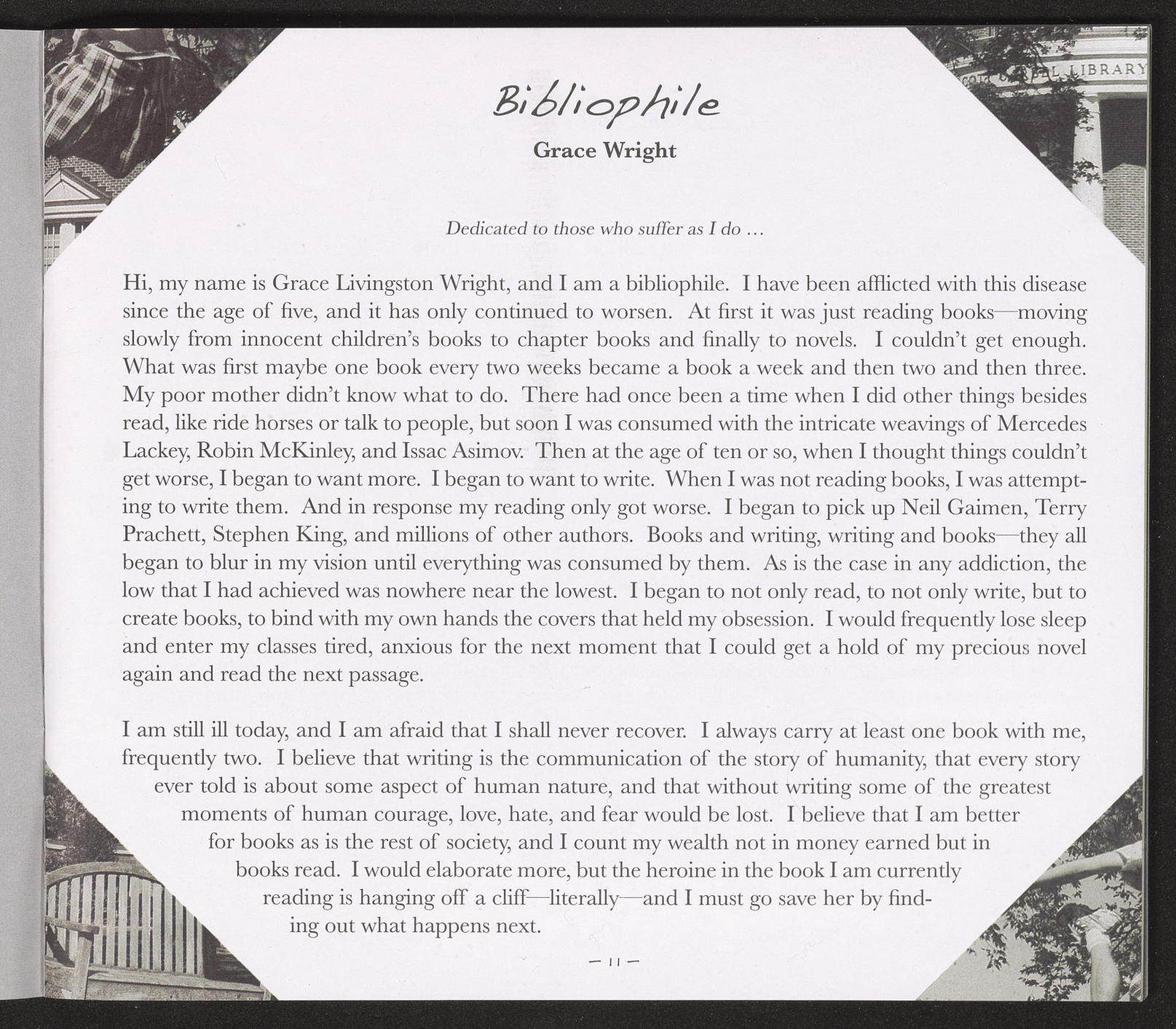
I don't think I've ever come across something that could manipulate my emotions quite so easily as a poem. And for this reason, it is important to look at things as a poet might. Creating images, personifying objects, and reversing the order of simple words makes everything look, sound, and feel more vital. With poems that uproot and reconstruct almost every little thing we encounter on a daily basis (such as leaves and roads and sleep and clouds), it is impossible to run out of reasons to be happy ... and that's the best emotion to feel.



Elizabeth Counihan



Carell Palmer



Bibliophile

Grace Wright

Dedicated to those who suffer as I do ...

Hi, my name is Grace Livingston Wright, and I am a bibliophile. I have been afflicted with this disease since the age of five, and it has only continued to worsen. At first it was just reading books—moving slowly from innocent children's books to chapter books and finally to novels. I couldn't get enough. What was first maybe one book every two weeks became a book a week and then two and then three. My poor mother didn't know what to do. There had once been a time when I did other things besides read, like ride horses or talk to people, but soon I was consumed with the intricate weavings of Mercedes Lackey, Robin McKinley, and Issac Asimov. Then at the age of ten or so, when I thought things couldn't get worse, I began to want more. I began to want to write. When I was not reading books, I was attempting to write them. And in response my reading only got worse. I began to pick up Neil Gaimen, Terry Prachett, Stephen King, and millions of other authors. Books and writing, writing and books—they all began to blur in my vision until everything was consumed by them. As is the case in any addiction, the low that I had achieved was nowhere near the lowest. I began to not only read, to not only write, but to create books, to bind with my own hands the covers that held my obsession. I would frequently lose sleep and enter my classes tired, anxious for the next moment that I could get a hold of my precious novel again and read the next passage.

I am still ill today, and I am afraid that I shall never recover. I always carry at least one book with me, frequently two. I believe that writing is the communication of the story of humanity, that every story ever told is about some aspect of human nature, and that without writing some of the greatest moments of human courage, love, hate, and fear would be lost. I believe that I am better for books as is the rest of society, and I count my wealth not in money earned but in books read. I would elaborate more, but the heroine in the book I am currently reading is hanging off a cliff—literally—and I must go save her by finding out what happens next.

Forgetfulness

Jasmine Miller

Oublier, olvidar, to forget. It's something we all do. I forget my math book, my little brother forgets to go to the bathroom, and my mom forgets to pay a bill. My dad forgets to put the recycling bin out every third Wednesday. For the past month, my choir director forgot that her choral conference was in March, not February (and she had already scheduled a substitute!).

These are the kinds of things that we forget, only to have resurface a second too late. These are the things that frustrate us, and sometimes embarrass us. Remembrance of these comes at a high cost, usually stress or anxiety—basically the whole array of nasty human emotions that we spend our entire lives trying to avoid. I personally don't feel so happy when I'm stuck in a car with a five-year-old who's screaming for the potty.

With remembrance comes that signature rush of fear, the nasty feeling in the pit of your stomach when someone triggers your memory. You think, "Wait, is that today?" and tell yourself it isn't. You know it is. This is the first step: *Denial*.

You then rack your brain for reasons as to why you didn't fulfill your obligation. Invariably, you find one, and you repeat it to yourself a million times in a row. The number one rule of forgetting is that it isn't your fault. Step two: *Justification*.

Then there is a frantic scramble to fix your blunder if you have time, and if you don't ... well, you resign yourself to utter failure—to having to deal with whatever it was that evaporated from your memory. This is the final and most important step: *Coping*.

Unfortunately, three steps are just too good and clean to be true.

So, in case of whininess or general bad spirits on the part of the person involved, an extra step is added: *Kvetching*, *Griping*, *Moaning*, and all-around *Complaining* to anyone and everyone who will listen.

I hate that step.

Forgetfulness is a plague. It seeps into our unsuspecting brains, preying on our most crucial—or at least what feels like our most crucial—thoughts. It's particularly nasty when something has already forged the way—like stress, for instance. Our crammed, overstuffed minds are begging for solace, and so, like a fair-weather friend, forgetfulness swoops in to ever so politely take some things off our minds. And unfortunately, there are some things that it never gives back.



Rachel Styers

You see, forgetfulness is much more conniving than we think it is. It hands over our deadlines, our duties, and our do's and don'ts, after a short period of extreme duress, while keeping those things which we should value the very most.

Do you know how blue the sky is?

Can you paint the utter whiteness of snow?

What color is the sunset?



Julia Liang

I don't know, at least not now. If I need a reminder I can look outside, but the minute I stop looking it's gone. I'll have a hazy idea, but with each day that idea grows smaller and farther away, much like an island that my mind is voyaging away from. The sky is always bluer than I think it is, the snow is softer than I thought it would be, and the sunset—well, it always overshadows my expectations.

As my brother full well knows, I've forgotten what it feels like to play, and every day I forget how much I love my music, as my mother laments. I know why I forget, but I don't want to.

Forgetfulness is encroaching upon my heart, bringing with it its awful four-letter companion (incidentally also starting with 'f') that governs the human mind, both conscious and unconscious. And while Freud might disagree, it's not that four letter f-word that is so commonly scrawled on the cheap plastic partitions in public bathrooms.

The word is fear.

I'm afraid. I'm afraid that I'm wasting my time, that I'm not good enough. The blueness of the sky makes me dizzy with wonder; the whiteness of snow is too clean. How can I live up to its pure expectations? The sunset does nothing but remind me that another day is over, and that it's one less day for me to live. The joys of toys dredge up the past, while my music ... it scares me. I can't break free. I can't let it go like I want to, because I don't know what would happen if I did.

Yet I love the sky, and snow, and sunsets, and dolls, and violins, and pianos, and the way the sun turns my hair red. I love the dead cold of winter, and the persistent heat of summer. I love the way it feels to give someone a hug. I don't want to forget, but forgetfulness outwits me every time. The world is full of trivia, and that trivia is what forgetting thrives on.

• • •

Se rappeler, recordar, to remember. It's something we should all do. My brother remembers to bring his favorite toy to school, my mom remembers to tell me that she loves me, and my father remembers to hug me goodnight. As for me, I remember to look at the sky, and smile, and walk away. And each time I walk the blue-tinged memory lives on for just a little bit longer than the time before. I'm working on it.

I figure that in about fifty years I'll be able to look at the sky and realize that it's just as blue as I remembered it was.



Ashley Hayden



Janie Jackson

Know

Becca Hill

Know is stronger than
“No,” the murderer of dreams:
the word we expect and fear
as it slides past the
molars to the tip of the tongue where
with a vibration
it meets the roof of the mouth and
annunciates something untrue.

The lie
is weak, however,
and can be conquered by
softly most anything like the marriage of fingers
or three small flowers
or three hours later—
so weak in fact that I am
surprised by your anxiety ...

The truth was, you see, there all along.



Jeune Jo



Arianna Burkhardt

Octavia Obolensky (opposite page)

Museum Dolor

Suzanne Lewis

I can't help but think
I should be in awe
but the cleaned and refinished
objects look so present that I feel
as if they were made yesterday;
these two lion-like sphinxes,
for someone's driveway gates
and this Egyptian Dog
that looks so shiny and new
quite possibly is the figurine
I saw my mother buy
sculpted to look just as those
from ancient Egypt.

Where is the erosion that was built
slowly over thousands of years?
Where are the stories told
from the droughts and storms
that lie so delicately for us to read
constructed in the layers

of grime and dirt
that build upon the stone?

I walk through the last room
where more shiny stone
lays out for my inspection,
but I am tired so I keep walking
glancing only shortly
at what I know
should bring me to a halt.

I leave the museum
ashamed of my ungrateful thinking
wishing I had tried to think harder
or stood just a little longer—

foolish almost
to try to bring together
two worlds
duly riven by time.





Margaret Roberts

How It Starts

Carolyn Murdock

A glance.
The smirk.
Eye contact.
Look away.
A second.
The grin.
Beating heart.
Move closer.
A scent.
The smile.
Nervous laughter.
Get nearer.
A nudge.
The touch.
Goose bumps.
Say something.
An introduction.
The meeting.
Strange feeling.
Fall in love.

A Night

Jasmine Miller

Night falls

Day breaks

Such violence in innocence

How better to describe the passing of the hours?

I say

Night drapes

Day blooms

How peaceful we rest

From dusk to dawn



Megan Wilson



The Moon Is Thought Suspended

Becca Hill

The moon is thought suspended—
vapid in her purple nothing,
wanting (more than most things)
the lament she occasionally receives from
some forget-me-not portrait painter who thinks
he built emotion.

She is vanity
with her sky mirror
winking placidly back, and
her lovers' arms have none to meet ...
she enjoys knowing it.

She secretly weeps

only
because her nomad grandchildren
carry light to strangers. Too glorious
is their job, their journey
to pay homage to their idle grandmother.

The moon,
whose neighbors bump carelessly
into her with the glib giddiness of rush,
is left pockmarked and unwanted except
by people too far away
whom she cannot kiss.



Eleanor Ezell



Liz Fletcher

Breaths

Grace Wright

Breath One

The feel of wet grass and earth under bare feet, the taut trampoline and a huge comforter in the western sun, the feel of upturned dirt, my grandmother alone in the early morning light, and the taste of wild mint.

Breath Two

The slippery creek bottom and the feel of cool water over hot feet, the ceremonial appearance of the arrival of a million buttercups signaling bouquets almost unspanable by two small hands, the musty dark barn stacked with a baled playground smelling of dust, manure, and dried clover.

Breath Three

Hide and seek in the thickening dusk, slowly turning to German Spotlight, chasing specks of light in the deep blue of night, walking in the hay fields and forests, made silvery and magical by nearly blinding moonlight

Breath Four

Dancing through the house making sure to hug everyone in joyous welcome

and love, the warmth of Granny's kitchen and the wonderful smells, sitting above the table on the high stool in my specific place to the right of my mountainous Paw-paw, and family gatherings lasting into the night, drowsily muttering in rich tones.

Breath Five

Watching the shadows of my maple shift across the white lace curtains, racing the rain across the lawn only to stop and dance in its sun shower, lying in the tall grass safely falling into the unrivaled blue sky, and standing firm in the strong warm winds.

Breath Six

Wandering away to get lost in the magical forests, questing for the whatchamacallit until the deep toll of the old bell, the easy swinging gate of a farm child, and thorn-scratched feet padded on cool packed dirt.

Last Breath

The soul, the breath, the heartbeat of this all-consuming entity who is my mother, my playmate, my home.

July

Kara Earthman

Thub crash, thub crash
The salty waves shatter simultaneously with my heartbeat
Breathe in, breathe out
With each breath my lungs taste the sweet air of summer
The unforgiving sun pierces through my closed eyelids
Reflecting the sweat on my cinnamon-bun brown skin
And kissing my hair with its instant-blonde touch



Blair Carter



Taylor Fettroll



Pool of Determination

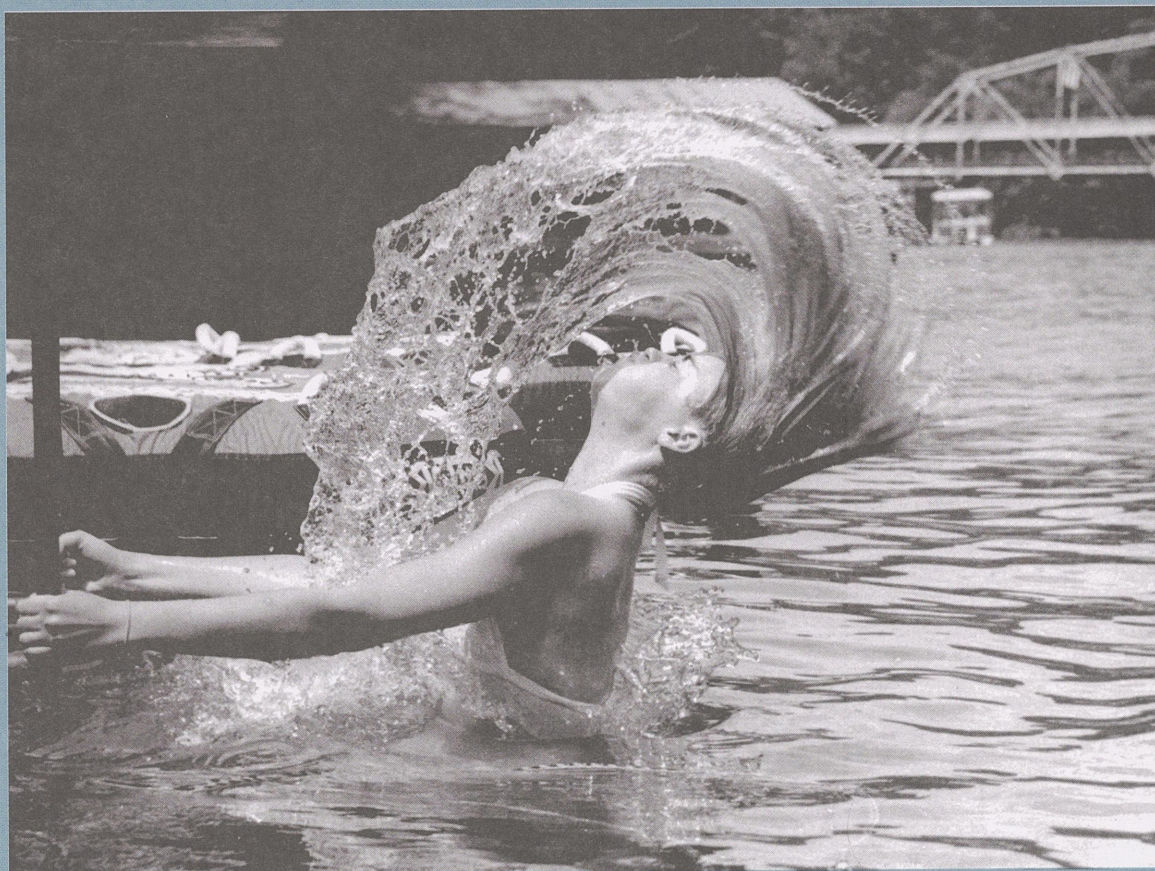
Maggie Wilkins

Warrior face paint
Chanting cries in a huddle
Jumping up and down around the fire
For the big meet that is our fight.

Everyone is pumped
With their green spray paint,
Feathered headdresses, and pipe cleaners
Woven about their hair.

Busy rumble of the crowd
Zzzzzzz zzzzzzzzzzz
Each index and middle finger entwined
Hopes and prayers in the air.

A burn in the bottom of my stomach
Concentration unbreakable
I plunge into the
Pool of determination.



Lauren Riegle



Misenus

Molly Robert

There is a place where the sea sounds
With the cacophony of querulous waves
That sigh against the coast and pound
The sleeping gold of the sandy shore.

And here the sun casts longing looks
Across the sparkle of white foamed waves.
A young battered body lies on the sea shore
While white skinned crabs choose their graves.

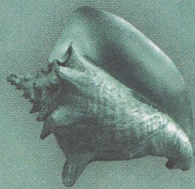
He is strangled by the flotsam of the sea;
His bloated face stretches in a sickly smile,
He has come to lie here for a little while.

The lullaby of the sea cannot wake him.
He will stay forever in this sandy place
With a lonesome smile on his haunted face.

Misenus, companion of Hector in Greek mythology, challenged Triton to a conch-blowing contest and fell victim to Triton's wrath. The drowned trumpeter was left to wash up on a lonely strand.



Lauren Riegle





Ashley Hayden

Watermelon

Alexandra Guillen

Filled, like a watermelon with pellets of information

Full, like a baby's diaper, on two hours too long

So full a moon rises to make way for the billabog

As it hounds the poor, feeble mouse

Eating string cheese off the kitchen floor

She committed suicide because she was allergic to milk and its products

A lactose intolerant person does not need a knife

Buy spreadable butter to serve with a spoon!

Trust me, they'll get it ;-)

Oh yeah! Yessss!

It was more fulfilling than the best!

He had won the gold medal for eating turnip greens


And lima beans

Which were fed to my pet llama Tina

Tina with the black spot



Sally Anne Harrell



Something Like Home

Mary Tek

I thought the snow was beautiful that day,
Nonchalantly falling even though no one thought it should.

I was sitting in this restaurant in Harlem eating
Grits and sweet potato pancakes and I saw those
Snowflakes and I thought, "I need to live in this city.
It's snowing in April and people just get out their sweaters,
Light their cigarettes, and keep walking."

I'm wearing a faux fur coat and black boots
And feeling like this was right all along.

Gunpowder and Sand

Emily Tseng

"I signed up the day after my birthday. I didn't tell anyone."

His voice was steady, as if he had rehearsed five hundred times before. The receiver was cold against my ear, echoing the feeling in my head. I couldn't think, with him pouring these things so quickly into my brain like molten metal on open skin. I should have known that he would do something like this. I should have thought to ask him about his graduation plans. I had practically interrogated every other graduating senior in our class. Why had I never thought to ask Dylan?

"The recruiter told me I wouldn't have to tell anybody, at least until graduation. But I wanted you to know first, before you saw it on the class list."

I could remember meeting Dylan for the first time in third grade on the playground swings. It was a Friday, I remember, because we had an extra long recess and that only happened on Fridays. I could remember having a crush on him

in fifth and sixth grade, hiding it because he was my best friend, and I knew from *Dawson's Creek* that best friends never had it right.

"My dad did it too, y'know. Signed up the minute he turned eighteen, before the draft got him. Did a year in Vietnam, and only got shot twice."

When his dad started drinking in our freshman year, Dylan'd come over to our house so that he wouldn't get yelled at or beaten. He moved out with his mom in sophomore year, but my mom kept two extra seats at the table just in case, and they used to come over for dinner on Fridays when they could.

"I figure I'll do eighteen months, get out before they can give me one of those extensions. Then I'll retire and, I don't know, be a cop."

Dylan had called me, practically dying of excitement, the day after he first kissed Jenna Oppenheimer. He had also called me, low and depressed, when they broke up one Saturday night

at the movies after seeing *The Notebook*. When his mom came home from the bar with a man only six years older than us, he called me from his room to keep his mind off the sound of the guy's voice. I had gone to all his basketball games that I could make; he had done the same for my tennis tournaments.

"I don't even have to be the guy shooting people. I can work in medical corps if I want to. I could even run computers if I felt like it."

I guess I'd always assumed that he'd go to college with me. I guess I assumed he would always be there.

"So are you going to say something?"

I opened my mouth then, and I couldn't say anything. Not a word of advice or a shriek of horror or a friendly jab.

"I'll still call you on Friday nights, if we're both

still sitting there with nothing to do." His voice was soft and gentle. I didn't want to admit it, but I could feel something like wetness in the corners of my eyes. "I'll still be around; I'll just be gone somewhere, busy for a while."



Sydney Cannon

I couldn't say anything—not a word. Nothing seemed right. A whole dictionary wouldn't have the words I needed to say.

I knew that it would be a long time before I could look at him without seeing bomb explosions and blood in my mind's eye, and even longer before I could talk to him and not feel like someone had cut out a piece of my heart and left me in the desert to be shot and beheaded at dawn. Most of all, I knew

that it would be many Friday nights before I could breathe again, and not feel like the air around me was weighted with gunpowder and sand.

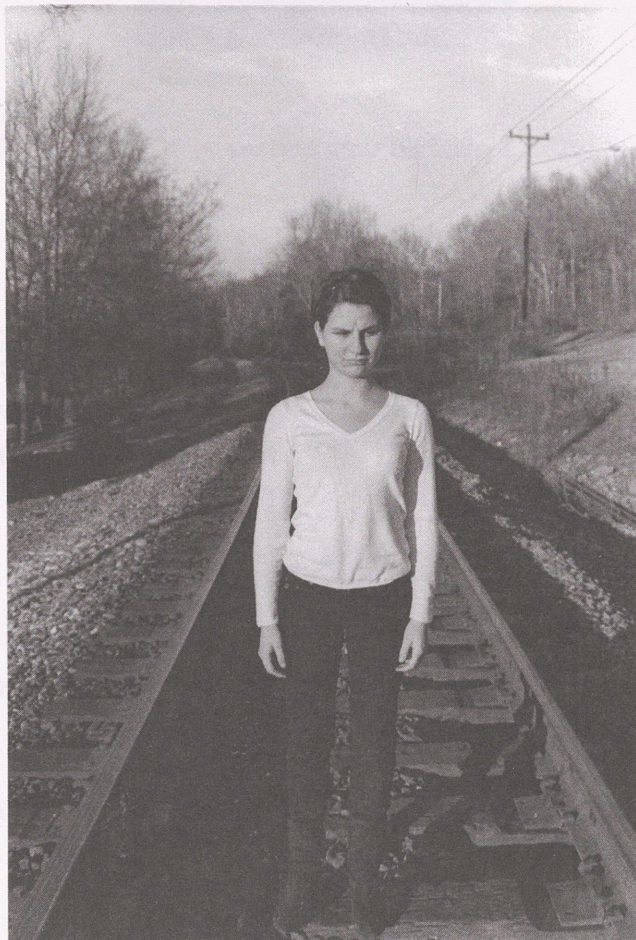
Goodbye

Becca Hill

How do I say them, those two little words?
(crammed together unaccidentally to get it over with)
My brain doesn't know them or my heart.
My chapped lips can't make the vibrations
—won't—to untie these fingers.

And twice is far too beautiful a moment for repetition

so, goodbye.



Emi Mimms

SONG



**Tracks 1, 2, and 4 produced by
Nashville songwriter
and Bonnie Raitt sideman
George Marinelli**

**Track 3 produced by
Nashville songwriter
and FAB frontman
David Kent**

*All instrumentation on tracks 1, 2, and 4 by George Marinelli.
Acoustic guitar by Joe Croker on tracks 1 and 2.*

*Claudia Crook is responsible for each instrument and
all vocal parts on track number 3, "Hello."*

*Vocals by LeRoy, Carson, and Burd
on #s 1, 2, and 4 respectively.*

Tracks

- 1 *NO WORDS* • written by Kristin LeRoy & Joe Croker
- 2 *DEAR CHILD* • written by Lisa Carson & Joe Croker
- 3 *HELLO* • written by Claudia Crook
- 4 *I REMEMBER* • written by Olivia Burd



Caroline Mack

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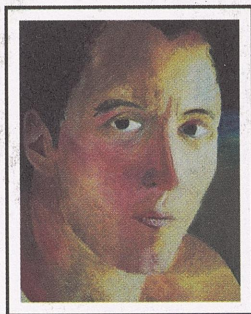
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The image above, painted by **Claire Moll**, is of **Eric Volz**, sibling of Harpeth Hall senior **Caitlin Anthony**. Volz currently sits in a Nicaraguan jail, accused of a crime he patently did not commit. The staff of *Hallmarks* hopes that by the time “Still Warm from the Day” is published, Eric will be able to read this document—and all others of his choosing—in freedom. We are with you, Eric.

www.friendsofericvolz.com